

THE LEADING EDGE

The electronic newsletter of the AGTS D.Min. Program in
Pentecostal Leadership
Shaping servant leaders to change the world in the power of the
Spirit
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IN THIS ISSUE:

"Emerging Models of Ministry in the 21st Century": An AGTS
Leadership Roundtable
Quotable: The Value of a "To-Don't" List
LeaderLife: The Balanced Organization, Part 2
Data Dump: Shifting American Spirituality
Links to the Future: Web Resources
We Recommend: Spiritual, But Not Religious
Next Step: New E-group Roll Out this Month!
Talk To Us: Feedback

EMERGING MODELS OF MINISTRY IN THE 21ST CENTURY: AGTS will
partner with the Northern California District to host Brian
McLaren in a Leadership Roundtable Conference on "Emerging
Models of Ministry in the 21st Century," March 4-5, 2002. Brian
pastors Cedar Ridge Community Church in the Washington D.C. area
and is the author of *The Church on The Other Side*, and *A New
Kind of Christian*. He is a leading thinker on what it takes to
develop relevant ministry in today's culture. Location: Hilton
Arden West, Sacramento. Registration: \$150 before Feb. 16, and
\$175 thereafter. Space is limited to 125 participants for
maximum interaction. Other speakers are AGTS President Byron
Klaus on "Pentecostal Theology in the 21st Century," and D.Min.
Director Earl Creps on "The Emerging Church: A Video Report from
the Front Lines."

Online registration at:

http://www.agts.edu/conferences/leadership_roundtable2002.html

Or call: 1-800-467-2487, ext. 1044

QUOTABLE: THE VALUE OF A "TO-DON'T" LIST

"Create a 'To-Don't' list that contains tasks, rituals, and
meetings that you should never waste your time on again. Then
stick to it."

-Tom Peters

<http://www.fastcompany.com/realtime/philly/mentors.html>,

management guru and author

LEADERLIFE: THE BALANCED ORGANIZATION, Part 2

Last issue we talked about the importance of achieving organizational balance. One enemy of this blessed state is the adrenaline-addicted leader who models an overwrought workstyle. This person will create a frenetic, stressed-out group that will eventually mutiny or self-destruct.

Achieving balance (which I define as sustainable, healthy, purposeful, missional ministry) is tricky. The B-state is always being threatened by clever counterfeits that in the short-term seem easier and more productive. Here are some counterfeit types.

Type 1: Extremism in Every Direction-this definition contends that the B-state is achieved by working really hard at absolutely every opportunity that presents itself. Proponents generally use slogans like, "find a need and fill it." (Clue: announcements of church activities take longer than the CBS Evening News).

Type 2: Bland Blend-the idea here is to appease the various factions within the church by providing token gestures in the form of ministries and worship styles. Proponents use phrases like, "something for everyone." (Clue: the Gregorian chant comes right after the Vineyard chorus on Sunday morning.)

Type 3: Back and Forth-the B-state is thought to be the product of changing philosophy and ministry at frequent intervals, the idea being that if we change our ministry enough times the organizational "average" will be one of balance. Proponents tend to react to criticism by making changes. (Clue: when the leader returns from a conference everyone waits for this month's "vision" to be announced.)

Type 4: The Wax Museum-this group defines balance as a state of near-total safety accomplished by making minimal changes to the status quo. Like an aging movie star, proponents eventually become a caricature of what they started out to be. (Clue: similar forms of balance are observed at mortuaries everywhere.)

Type 5: Proportional Representation-some leaders attempt to find the B-state by investing equal resources and staffing in each of the purposes they are trying to achieve. Proponents often define this equal distribution of wealth as a virtual guarantee of church health, overlooking the fact that some purposes (e.g., evangelism) simply require a lot more investment than others. (Clue: the church goes "Purpose-Driven" but never seems to really take off.)

The real B-state is easy to distinguish from the fakes. Here are some key traits:

1. Sustainable: an organization in the B-state can keep on keeping on almost indefinitely. Ask your leaders, "How long could our organization keep going in its present configuration?"
2. Healthy: balance requires relationships that are in a positive state, and work that is focused on the things that count. Ask your leaders, "If our organization were a person having an annual physical, what would the doctor's report say?"
3. Purposeful: B-state groups know exactly what business they are in and are fearless about assessing whether those purposes are being accomplished. Ask your leaders to write down their definition of why you are in business and how they would know the state of that business; then ask each to share their answers.
4. Missional: Christian organizations all have the same larger purpose-to accomplish the mission of Jesus in the earth. This is the ultimate criterion against which everything else is measured. Lead your leaders in a scripture study on the mission of Christ and then have them hold of the organization against that standard for evaluation.

Authentic balance begins with confronting and rejecting these counterfeits. In fact, a great deal of what is called "change management" really comes down to doing exactly that.

Blessings,

Earl Creps, Ph.D.
D.Min. Program Director, AGTS

DATA DUMP: SHIFTING AMERICAN SPIRITUALITY

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2001/152/42.0.html>

A CT.Com article reports a study finding that 1 in 6 Americans has changed their religious preference since 1990. A link is provided to the original study by the Graduate Center of CUNY (an online version is available) finding that "solo spirituality" and "church shopping consumerism" found in an earlier (1990) study have only gotten stronger.

LINKS TO THE FUTURE: WEB RESOURCES

<http://www.previewport.com/Home/sweet-newsletter.html>

Check out this website to sign up for Len Sweet's free e-mail newsletter on emerging culture/church issues.

<http://www.llamagraphics.com/>

This website carries "Life Balance" software for your Palm PDA that will automatically adjust your tasks according to your priorities and even provide charts depicting how well your time management matches your objectives. It costs \$39.95. Not for the fainthearted!

http://agts.edu/faculty/faculty_publications/bibliographies/creps_bibliography/index.html

Follow this link to my Emerging Culture/Emerging Church Resource List. It is a free pdf download containing approximately 800 resources (with an annotated web section) on the emerging church. A revised edition will appear during November with an improved system of categories and about 1000 resources. One of many resources available free on my page.

WE RECOMMEND: SPIRITUAL, BUT NOT RELIGIOUS

Robert C. Fuller's *Spiritual, But Not Religious: Understanding Unchurched America* (Oxford, 2002). Fuller offers an insightful historical study of the nation's religious habits portraying America as much more committed to personal spiritual practices (ranging from meditation to channeling) than to formal church affiliations. He argues that, far from being a new development, this tendency has been prevalent since colonial days. A helpful book for understanding the major spiritual strongholds that pose a challenge for the gospel today. You can buy this book at:

http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0195146808/qid=1012749466/sr=1-1/ref=sr_1_1/102-0358746-7902502

NEXT STEP: E-GROUP ROLLS OUT THIS MONTH!

We now have over 100 people enrolled in our new D.Min. egroup. Sign-up was completed in December. Technical bugs were worked out in January. This month we will roll out the egroup and form an electronic DMin community.

Watch for your email notification and jump right in!

All D.Min. participants, graduates, and faculty are included in this closed, mediated e-group. The goal is threefold: (1) Adding value: to enhance our participants' ministries through dialog on leadership; (2) Building relationship: to increase the level of contact among us by developing community in cyberspace; (3) Organizational improvement: to become a more effective D.Min. learning organization by listening consistently to our participants and faculty. Earl will mediate all postings.

Discussion is limited to leadership resources, issues, and challenges. No rabbit trails (e.g., promotion, theological debates, spleen-venting, etc.) will be posted. There are many other venues for those things.

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Please feel free to forward to a friend.

THE LEADING EDGE...cutting a path from today to tomorrow